

Message Text

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41

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AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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USIAC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:

SUBJECT: PARTY WARNS AGAINST DANGERS OF FOREIGN MEDIA

FOR IEA

1. "SIENG PASASON" (VOICE OF THE PEOPLE), THE PARTY DAILY ORGAN, WARNED IN ITS JULY 15 ISSUE THAT UNLESS THE LAO PEOPLE ARE VIGILANT THEY RUN THE RISK OF FALLING INTO THE CLUTCHES OF THE "NEO-COLONIALISTS' GLOOMY CULTURE". REFERRING TO FOREIGN MOVIES, BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS AS THE "LAST AND MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON PLANTED BY THE ENEMY" THE PAPER CALLED ON ALL LAO TO BE AWARE OF THE "DANGERS OF COLONIALISTSJP CULTURE" AND HELP ONE ANOTHER ERADICATE ITS EFFECTS FROM "TOP TO BOTTOM".

2. MOVIES AND MUSIC, TWO FORMS OF POPULAR CULTURE, CAME IN FOR PARTICULAR ATTENTION. ALTHOUGH NO WESTERN MOVIES ARE NOW SHOWN IN VIENTIANE, INDIAN, SOVIET AND CHINESE KUNG FU FILMS ARE STILL SEEN. PRESUMABLY SOVIET FILMS ARE CONSIDERED WHOLE-SOME ENOUGH BUT "THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE" (REFERRED TO BY SOME WAGS IN THE EMBASSY AS THE "VILLAGE VOICE") COMPLAINED OF THE DELETERIOUS EFFECTS ON THE NATION'S YOUTH OF THE LUXUR-

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IOUS LIVING, CRIME AND "SILLY LOVE" DEPICTED BY THESE "NEO-COLONIALIST" MOVIES. INSTEAD OF PAYING ATTENTION TO THEIR STUDIES THESE MISLED YOUNG PEOPLE WASTE THEIR TIME RECITING THE STORIES OF THE FILMS TO ONE ANOTHER AND TRY TO EMULATE THE ACTIONS AND DRESS OF THE MOVIE STARS, CINEMATIC PIED PIPERS ALL. WHAT'S MORE THEY WASTE MONEY BUYING RECORDS AND TAPES OF THE MUSIC OF THEIR FAVORITE FILMS. SOME HAVE EVEN FALLEN SO LOW UNDER THE BANEFUL INFLUENCE OF THESE FILMS AS TO STEAL FROM THEIR PARENTS.

3. SOME OUTSIDE NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES ARE STILL AVAILABLE AT A FEW STORES IN VIENTIANE. THE LEFTIST THAI NEWSPAPER "PRACHACHAT" IS SOLD HERE. IN ADDITION, "TIME", "NEWSWEEK" AND THE "ASIAN ECONOMIC REVIEW" ARE SOLD. BUT BECAUSE NONE OF THESE ARE IN LAO THEIR IMPACT IS LIMITED AND PROBABLY DOES NOT CAUSE AS MUCH CONCERN AS FILMS WHICH ARE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL LEVELS OF THE POPULATION.

4. THE ART OF SONG COMPOSITION IS ALSO FAILING TO LIVE UP TO THE HIGH STANDARDS SET FOR IT BY THE NEW REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE OF LAOS. "THE VOICE" FOUND THE LYRICS OF NEWLY WRITTEN SONGS ACCEPTABLE ENOUGH BUT COMPLAINED THAT MANY OF THE TUNES ARE IMITATIONS OF THE "DESPERATE LOVE SONGS" THAT WERE POPULAR IN THE "OLD REGIME", WHICH OF COURSE WAS HIP AND THIGH WITH THE COLONIALIST CULTURES. THIS MUSIC IS OFTEN USED FOR PURE ENTERTAINMENT AND HAS NO SOCIAL EDUCATIONAL VALUE AT ALL, ACCORDING TO THE "VOICE". UNDER THE NEW DISPENSATION, APPARENTLY, MUSIC MUST EDUCATE THE SAVAGE BEAST AS WELL AS SOOTHE HIM.

5. HOWEVER, AT THE MOMENT THIS WARNING IS ALL BARK AND NO BITE. THE PARTY AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL ONLY BE ABLE TO RECTIFY THESE CULTURAL DEFICIENCIES "STEP BY STEP" BECAUSE IT HAS MORE "HEAVY AND COMPLICATED" TASKS TO DEAL WITH FIRST, THE "VOICE" STATES. IN THE MEANTIME ALL THOSE BOYS AND GIRLS WHO ARE BUSY EMULATING KUNG FU AND OTHERS ARE TOLD TO BELIEVE SINCERELY IN THE "IDEOLOGY OF REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE". TO SELF CRITICISM THEY WILL PRESUMABLY ADD A NEW WEAPON IN SOCIALIST REALIZATION, SELF X RATING.

6. THIS WARNING WILL HAVE NO IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON USIS
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OPERATIONS IN VIENTIANE SINCE WE NO LONGER HAVE PUBLIC FILM SHOWINGS OR DISTRIBUTE BOOKS THROUGH COMMERCIAL OUTLETS.
SUTTER

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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